

## Phillyrea - Growing Guide

### Caring For Phillyrea

#### *Jasmine Box*

Phillyrea are completely frost hardy evergreen shrubs which originate from the Mediterranean and southwest Asia. They may not be the most spectacular of plants in flowering terms and not perhaps as decorative as their related cousins, the osmanthus, but we use them in the garden to protect more tender neighbouring plants and to help create the sort of small microclimates which these need. Dense evergreen shrubs certainly have their place in a woodland garden.

Phillyrea angustifolia has narrow linear dark green leaves of around 2in in length. This shrub grows to around 10ft in height with, eventually, a similar spread. They have fragrant creamy-yellow flowers in cymes in which the terminal flower opens first. The cymes are only ½in across so are not particularly noticeable in late spring. Much more noticeable are the spherical fruits which are blue-black when ripe. This is a really good plant for exposed coastal positions and can be used as a hedge.

Phillyrea latifolia is also a dense rounded shrub or small tree which looks a bit like an olive. Its leaves are oval and a glossy dark green. Around 2.5 in in length. The branches on this shrub are often bowed over by the weight of its luxuriant foliage. Again the flowers are an insignificant dull white in late spring followed by spherical blue-black fruits. This species can grow to 20-25ft with a similar spread when mature.

In coastal windbreaks these plants can be used where ilex oak (Quercus ilex) might grow too tall. They will tolerate partial shade and do not need any pruning.

Propagation from semi ripe cuttings taken in midsummer and set with bottom heat is fairly straightforward. Our summers in the UK are seldom hot enough for much fruit to be produced.



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*Phillyrea latifolia*



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